



To: Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport: Councillor Kevin Blencowe  
Report by: Head of Planning Services  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Development Plan Scrutiny 11/11/2014 Sub Committee  
Wards affected: East Chesterton and King Hedges

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**CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE EAST (CNFE) AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP) ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT**

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**Not a key decision**

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area is one of the most important brownfield regeneration opportunities in Greater Cambridge. The new Local Plans for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire recognise that regeneration and redevelopment of the area is important, both in the short term aligned with the opportunity presented by the opening of a new rail station and in the long term to ensure that maximum regeneration benefits are captured for Greater Cambridge.
- 1.2 Work started on the development of an Area Action Plan for the CNFE earlier in 2014, in parallel with the later stages of the Local Plans. This report presents the background research and evidence base prepared so far and possible development options for the area in an issues and options consultation document.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Subject to any changes from the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee, the Executive Councillor is recommended:
  1. To agree the Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area Action Plan Issues and Options (CNFE AAP I&O) Report for consultation jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council;
  2. To note and approve the evidence base that supports this work as contained in the appendices to this report;
  3. To agree the approach to Consultation and Community Engagement set out in the strategy appended to the report; and

4. To delegate to the Head of Planning Services authority to finalise the consultation documents for publication including any minor typographical, formatting, editing or other inconsequential corrections that are necessary, in consultation with the Executive Councillor, DPSSC Chair and Planning Policy and Transport Opposition Spokes.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The CNFE area has been the subject of regeneration policy aspirations for at least two decades.
- 3.2 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are both updating their adopted plans and producing new Local Plans for the period to 2031. The Proposed Submission versions of the plans were submitted to the Secretary of State on 28 March 2014 and the examination hearings are due to start in November 2014.
- 3.3 Policy 14 in the submitted Cambridge Local Plan and Policy SS/4 in the submitted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan seek the regeneration of CNFE and say that the precise amount of development, site capacity, viability, time-scales and phasing of development will be established through the preparation of a joint AAP for CNFE area.
- 3.4 Cambridgeshire County Council prepared a new Transport Strategy in tandem with the Local Plans in order to ensure a fully integrated planning and transportation approach. All three plans have been developed collaboratively and very much in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate.
- 3.5 Cambridgeshire County Council adopted the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy in 2011 and the Site Specific Proposals Plan in 2012. These include a number of waste, transport and minerals designations in the CNFE area.
- 3.6 Planning permission was granted on 18 December 2013 by the Joint Development Control Committee for the new Cambridge Science Park Railway Station on the Chesterton Rail Sidings.
- 3.7 The County Council is currently considering a planning application for reconfiguration and consolidation of the existing Lafarge minerals processing and DB Schenker transfer operation at Chesterton Rail Sidings which involves the relocation of the tracks within the sidings area closer to the main railway line, freeing up land for redevelopment.
- 3.8 In order to move forward with the promotion of this area, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council with support

from Cambridgeshire County Council as a key stakeholder agreed to start the preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for this area on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

3.9 The Area Action Plan (AAP) will go through the following stages:

- Issues and Options consultation (the current stage) – 8 December 2014 to 2 February 2015
- Pre-Submission public participation – September to October 2015
- Draft Plan submitted to the Secretary of State – April 2016
- Independent Examination into the soundness of the Plan by a Government Planning Inspector – April to September 2016
- Adoption – October 2016

3.10 As highlighted above, the Issues & Options Report is the first stage in the preparation of the Area Action Plan for Cambridge Northern Fringe East. The Issues and Options Report identifies the policy context guiding the AAP and outlines a number of site constraints that need to be taken into consideration. These include the capacity of the transport network, implication of odour from Water Recycling Centre on nearby uses, noise, land contamination, landscape and ecology. This work is ongoing and will feed into the preparation of the AAP.

3.11 The opportunities and constraints identified have informed the preparation of a series of Redevelopment Options, which capture ways in which the area could be regenerated.

3.12 A do nothing (baseline) option has been rejected, because it would not meet the Local Plan strategies to seek the positive regeneration of the area. However, it is a useful starting point for comparing with other redevelopment options in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal of the spatial redevelopment options and policy options accompanies this document.

3.13 Four main Redevelopment Options have been identified. Each option takes a more comprehensive approach to redevelopment than the previous option. These are summarised below:

- **Option 1: Lower Level of Redevelopment** – Creates an enhanced ‘Boulevard’ approach to the proposed new Station, to provide a gateway to Cambridge. Focuses on regeneration of areas of more easily available land, allowing existing business and the Water Recycling Centre to stay, whilst creating a major new area for businesses. This option could be delivered early but could

compromise the viability of longer term development options if not considered carefully.

- **Option 2: Medium Level of Redevelopment** – Focuses on regeneration of areas of more easily available land, allowing existing business and the Water Recycling Centre to stay. Includes new homes and a local centre near the proposed new station, to create a vibrant mixed use area around the gateway. More comprehensive redevelopment improving existing areas south of Cowley Road, to integrate them into the Station area. A new road north of Cowley Road to separate out industrial traffic from the main station access. Option for Nuffield Road industrial area to change to offices / residential. This option could be delivered in the short to medium term.
- **Option 3: Higher Level of Redevelopment** – Reconfiguration of the Water Recycling Centre onto a smaller site, with more indoor or contracted operations, subject to technical, financial and operational deliverability. Would retain the Water Recycling Centre on site but open up options for larger scale employment redevelopment and a mix of other uses. This option is complex and delivery of the full option would be in the longer term. The potential to phase redevelopment to achieve the objective of an early gateway to the proposed new station would need to be explored, whilst ensuring that the delivery of the full option is not prejudiced by piecemeal redevelopment. Also in this option, Nuffield Road industrial area is proposed for entirely residential development, with existing industry relocated north of Cowley Road.
- **Option 4: Maximum Level of Redevelopment** - Water Recycling Centre relocated off site, subject to identification of a suitable, viable and deliverable alternative site being identified. This would free up a large area of land for redevelopment, and the opportunity to comprehensively address the area. This option is complex and delivery of the full option would be in the longer term. The potential to phase redevelopment to achieve the objective of an early gateway to the proposed new station would need to be explored, whilst ensuring that the delivery of the full option is not prejudiced by piecemeal redevelopment.

3.14 The final development option that will form the basis of the adopted AAP is likely to be combination of aspects of more than one option.

- 3.15 The Issues and Options Report recognises that the Water Recycling Centre performs a vital infrastructure service for the Greater Cambridge area. Discussions are on-going with Anglian Water to explore whether either downsizing or relocating are capable of delivery taking account of technical, financial and operational issues. In the case of relocation, this is subject to a suitable viable and deliverable alternative site being identified. No alternative sites for the Water Recycling Centre have been identified at this stage. In the past, relocation has been explored and a viable alternative site was not able to be identified at that time. At this stage the Issues and Options Report is seeking views on whether the advantages of the maximum level of regeneration are such that this is the most desirable option. In this case the principle of relocation would need to be explored again.
- 3.16 Options 3 and 4 would require significant changes to the Water Recycling Centre and would present significant and complex delivery issues including timescales and investment to bring them forward. Development would need to come forward in phases to maximise early opportunities from the delivery of the proposed new station (due to open in 2016), to create a vibrant and welcoming environment residents and visitors. At the same time the longer term goals of more comprehensive redevelopment would need to be secured within the strategy of delivering the longer-term vision of regenerating the wider area.
- 3.17 Options also propose different approaches to the Nuffield Road industrial area. These range from no change, redevelopment for office type uses, or redevelopment for housing.
- 3.18 The Issues and Options Report also includes options covering a range of key policy options covering aspects such as densities of development, employment uses, housing mix, provision of services and facilities, place making and urban design, transport.
- 3.19 It also includes consideration of infrastructure and delivery.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Subject to the consideration and agreement by each Council, consultation on the Issues and Options Report is planned to take place on 8 December 2014 to 2 February 2015. The results of consultation will inform the preparation of a proposed submission Area Action Plan.

## 5. Implications

- (a) **Financial Implications** – The cost of producing the CNFE AAP will be primarily met from the budget agreed within two councils planning service budgets.
- (b) **Staffing Implications** - The work to develop the CNFE AAP is part of the agreed work programme for the Planning Service in 2014/15.
- (c) **Equality and Poverty Implications** – yes an EQIA has been undertaken and is attached to this report. It will continue to be updated as the AAP document is developed. The development of the CNFE area has huge potential to increase access to employment and opportunities for wards with high scoring multiple deprivation indicators in the north of the city.
- (d) **Environmental Implications** - This proposal has been given a Nil climate change rating. Although the physical development of the Cambridge Northern Fringe East Area will of course impact the environment, there is no physical work undertaken as part of this proposal as this project is still at the planning stage. Therefore, there are no environmental impacts in relation to this proposal.
- (e) **Procurement** – procurement of specialist advice and guidance has been undertaken in accordance with the Councils contract procedure rules
- (f) **Consultation and Community Engagement** – the proposed Consultation and Community Engagement strategy is attached to this report.
- (g) **Community Safety** – there are no adverse community safety implications from this work

## 6. Background papers

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

## 7. Appendices

- A. CNFE AAP Issues and Options Consultation Report
- B. Supporting Technical Statement
- C. Interim Sustainability Appraisal Annex: Detailed Assessment  
Tables – Appraisal of Spatial Redevelopment Options
- D. Interim Sustainability Appraisal: Appraisal of Policy Options

- E. Employment Options Study – Final Report
- F. Employment Options Study – Sector Profile
- G. Area Flood Risk Assessment
- H. Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy
- I. Equalities Impact Assessment

## **8. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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